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Here's something different—a hybrid magazine called TAGA *Plus*, combining business, lifestyle, and sports in a single package.

Inevitably, we get asked: Why TAGA *Plus*?

TAGA *Plus* springs from the magazine's sporting roots, when it was still known as TAGA *Sports*. Ten years since launching TAGA *Sports* in 2010, we feel it is high time and fitting to branch out into other facets of island living—hence "Plus"—one that captures the zeitgeist of what this magazine will strive for—what it intends to capture and portray.

This project is propelled by the understanding that people do not exist in a vacuum, that everything has a little of everything, that humans are not one-dimensional creatures but are complex ones who have lives outside of business and sports.

With TAGA *Plus*, we aim to give our readers a mixed bag of business, sports, and lifestyle features. Which means we welcome story ideas. If you think of a good subject for the magazine, by all means, shoot us an email at editor@saipantribune.com and we'd be sure to keep the suggestions in mind when we work on our next edition.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural edition of TAGA *Plus*. This is an ongoing experiment, so you will see changes as we go along. Can't wait to see what the next edition would look like.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA
Managing Editor

COVER ART

Trench Tech founder Cuki Alvarez teams up with his wife, Mari, to demonstrate what to do when someone attacks you by grabbing your wrist.

Photography by
ROSELYN MONROYO

TAGA plus
JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH 2020
VOLUME 10 NO. 1

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BEA CABRERA

Bea was pretty much involved in sports growing up. She was a varsity volleyball player in high school and shifted to varsity basketball in college. She started doing Crossfit in 2014 and that has fueled her drive for fitness as a lifelong passion. She believes that to inspire people to engage in healthier lifestyles is the best feeling in the world. To reach Bea, email her at beecabbie@gmail.com.

DRE DELOS SANTOS

Dre specializes in strength training and fat loss for women. While he certainly spends most of his time in the gym, he also enjoys being in the kitchen, and watching reruns of The Office. Dre is a personal trainer at Gold's Gym and is featured on fitness sites such as Weight Watchers, T-Nation, and STACK. Email Dre at www.dredelossantos.com.

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MAMI IKEDA

Mami's late parents used to run the Koto Restaurant in Susupe. A member of disaster relief team C.O.R.E. and the Commonwealth Racing Federation, and an advocate for the Commonwealth Cancer Association, Mami loves being a crazy cat mom and herb gardening. Contact her at mami99950@gmail.com.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Roselyn grew up watching Jacky Chan's action movies and memories of how she and her cousins used to mimic the actor's karate moves came flooding back after covering Trench Tech's seminar on self-defense. Contact Roselyn at roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com.

JON PEREZ

Jon, a former political and sports reporter of the Saipan Tribune, is now based in Canada with his family but spent nearly 10 years here on Saipan. He obtained his journalism degree from the University of the East in the Philippines and he was a regional councilor for education of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines, a national association of student writers. To reach him, email Saipan Tribune at editor@saipantribune.com.

MARK RABAGO

Mark used to play center in high school, but didn't grew an inch after turning 15. That meant adjusting his game to point guard when he grew older. He accepted the role to heart as each time he gets the ball he always wants to score—to the disdain of his teammates. Let's just say Mark took the point in "point guard" literally. Contact Mark at mark_rabago@saipantribune.com.

quick guide

JAN/FEB/MAR2020

6
FOOD & HEALTH
A 15-Minute Magic: Kado Crab Omelet Bowl. MAMI IKEDA

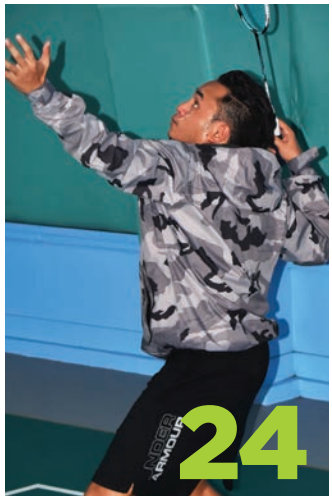
8
YOUR HEALTH
Dumb strategies that no longer apply. DRE DELOS SANTOS

10
INVESTING 101
Saving and investing wisely. JASON B. MIYASHITA

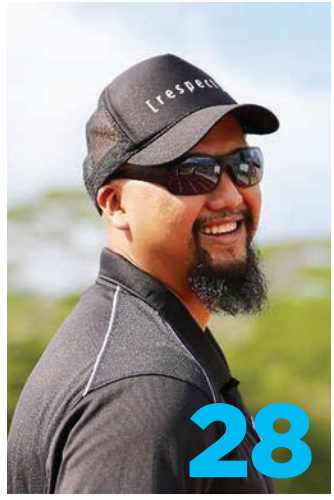
14
SIGHTS & SCENTS
A feast for the senses. ABBY DIMAANO

Q&A: Malika Miyakawa. MARK RABAGO

PEOPLE, ETC.: Ta Bun Kuy responds to the siren call of Saipan. BEA CABRERA



IN FOCUS: Swing switch. ROSELYN MONROYO



WHERE ARE THEY NOW: Oscar Ada. MARK RABAGO

20 GETTING IN GEAR: Quick tips when buying a used car. JON PEREZ

22 HR & YOU: What makes a good employer? BEA CABRERA

26 COVER FEATURE: Protect yourself from an attack. ROSELYN MONROYO

30 SNEAK PEEK: A whole new world. BEA CABRERA

32 LAST LOOK: 7 tips for transitioning back to work. CASSIE OWENS

Thank you

Great issue with stories from the 1969 Micronesian Olympics. And thanks for the surprise shoutout. I still have my old Toyota Wheels jersey, with many fond memories of our team well-coached by Tony Sablan and organized by Abner Venus. Great battles with the Ol' Aces and the Brothers! Thanks again for the issue.

Richard Brostrom, MD-MSPH
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

FEEDBACK METER
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Suggestions, criticism, corrections, and wild overreactions are welcome. By all means, send them to us and we will find space for them. Letters consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. So, please, no novellas.

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BEFORE USE

- Always keep the cylinder in upright position at ground level in a well-ventilated place.
- Always keep the gas stove on a platform above the cylinder level.
- Do not keep the cylinder in a cabinet or in a pit below floor level.

WHILE IN USE

- Never leave vessels unattended on burners in operation – the contents may overflow, extinguishing the flame and causing gas leakage.
- Always use cotton clothes and cotton apron while cooking; never use synthetic clothes like silk, chiffon, etc.
- Clothing is for wearing, not pan-handling. Use only pot holders.

AFTER USE

- Turn "off" the regulator knob and then the stove knob before retiring to bed.
- Always keep the regulator knob in "off" position when the cylinder is not in use.
- Empty cylinders must be stored in a cool and well-ventilated place with the safety cap put on.

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Kado Crab Omelet Bowl

Happy New Year! My first recipe of the year 2020 is a cheater's recipe (that's why "kado"). No need to buy pricy crab meat, ladies! Just get a Japanese instant fried rice mix (less than $2 for a pack of three packets), and you can make a restaurant-quality crab omelet bowl! Maybe not the healthiest crab omelet, but definitely easy on your wallet that's been open since the Black Friday—and you'll be surprised at how yummy it could be. Biba to the Japanese food industry that spoils its consumers! Enjoy!

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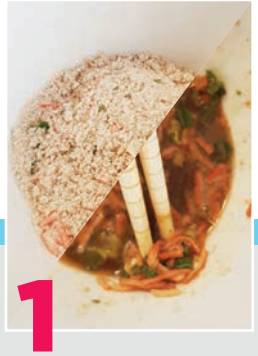
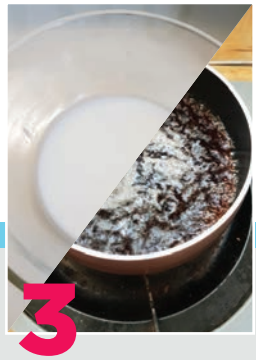


1

Prep an egg mix: Pour a packet of fried rice mix into a small bowl, and add a little water just so that it's easier to dissolve and mix with the eggs.

2

Add the three eggs into the bowl, and mix until the fried rice mix is completely dissolved. Set aside.

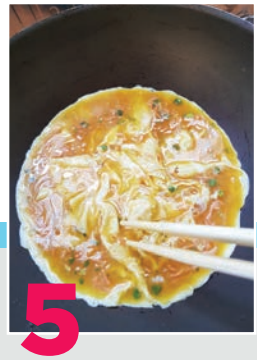


3

Make sweet and sour sauce: Add a tablespoon of water to your cornstarch. Put the rest of the ingredients in a sauce pan and bring to a boil.

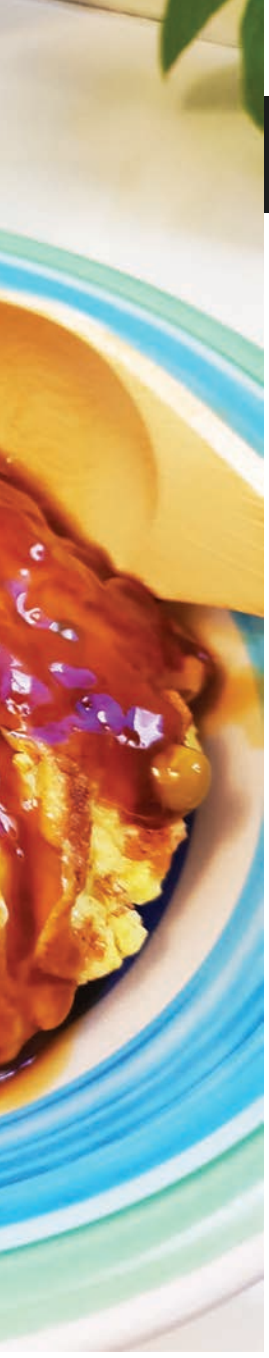
4

Pour in the cornstarch solution, and bring to another boil. Set aside.



5

Make the omelet: Heat your cooking oil in your frying pan until it is lightly smoking. Throw in your egg mix and stir the middle so you don't need to flip it raw like pros do!



INGREDIENTS

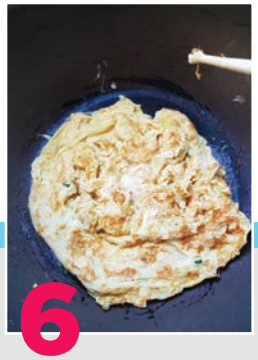
(1-2 persons)

Crab Omelet
1 packet Nagatanien Crab Fried Rice Mix
3 large eggs
1 tbsp sesame oil (or any cooking oil of your choice)

Sweet and Sour Sauce
1 cup water
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp mirin (or 1.5 tbsp sugar/honey)
1 tbsp vinegar
2 tsp cornstarch
Pinch of salt
1 tsp green peas

WHERE TO BUY

- **Nagatanien brand Crab Fried Rice Mix ($1.99):** Twins Market Lower Navy Hill and other local stores. Also available at Himawari at slightly lower price (but without instruction in English).
- **Mirin ($4.49):** Blue Sky Market, Joeten, Himawari, and other local stores



6

Flip your omelet and shape it to fit your bowl.

7

Put rice in your bowl, and slide your omelet on top. Cover your omelet with the sweet and sour sauce, and serve. Bon appetit!

TIP: Don't be shy with the amount of oil when it comes to eggs! The end result is far better with a little more oil than usual.

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dumb strategies that no longer apply

DREDE LOS SANTOS
www.dredelossantos.com
TAGA *Plus* Contributing Writer

With countless dietary camps coming into the fold pulling us in different directions, assessing the value of information can be quite unsettling because of the mixed data. For example, when I say you can eat the foods you like and still get in shape, that doesn't mean you can roll out the red carpet and prance your way to a better body. You're inevitably going to encounter some turbulence.

The point being, you have to be able to critically appraise what's what. There are a host of nutritional and training strategies that have withstood the test of time. Others, not so much. So in this article, I put to bed the schemes that no longer apply.

1 Frequent Meals Boost Metabolic Rate

First order of business is to address how often you should be eating. Out of all the half-baked ideas out there, this is one of the more longstanding recommendations. For years, it was customary to get in the act of eating five to six moderate-sized meals as a means to rev up the metabolism. As it turns out, it's becoming clear that that eating pattern does not increase your metabolic rate. Sure, you're almost guaranteed to experience increased hunger, which is a positive. But this creates a false impression that you're heading in the right direction. The problem is, if left unchecked, your intake could very well exceed your expenditure or output—and I've found that's what typically happens.

It's still an effective strategy if your lifestyle warrants it, but what heavily influences your metabolic rate more is your dietary protein and level of activity. By that admission, whether it's two to three meals or five to six, the more influential variables are overall food intake, protein, and exercise.

2 Exercising in a Fasted State Burns More Fat

Exercising in a fasted state is a popular practice among those seeking to accelerate body fat reduction. With strong evidence showing there is indeed an increased utilization of fat for fuel, it makes sense to omit breakfast if your goal is primarily fat loss.

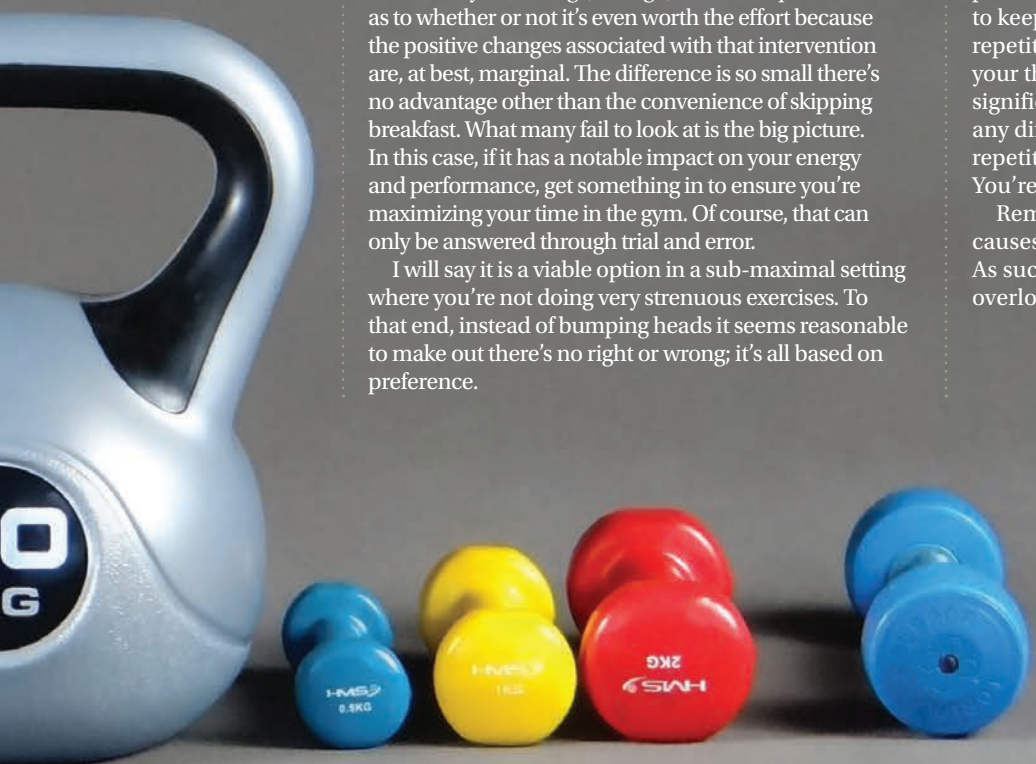
From my knowledge, though,it still isn't quite clear as to whether or not it's even worth the effort because the positive changes associated with that intervention are, at best, marginal. The difference is so small there's no advantage other than the convenience of skipping breakfast. What many fail to look at is the big picture. In this case, if it has a notable impact on your energy and performance, get something in to ensure you're maximizing your time in the gym. Of course, that can only be answered through trial and error.

I will say it is a viable option in a sub-maximal setting where you're not doing very strenuous exercises. To that end, instead of bumping heads it seems reasonable to make out there's no right or wrong; it's all based on preference.

3 High Reps for More Tone and Definition

Even though recent research has suggested lifting lighter loads is just as effective as using heavy weights for building muscle, relying entirely on the former is a poor choice and a strategy I wouldn't deem advisable. It still provides a modest stimulus but the big thing to keep in mind is, if the utility of higher repetition work has you working well below your threshold, the return is going to be significantly less. To illustrate, if there's hardly any difference between your first and last repetition of a squat, you need to bump it up. You're cutting yourself short.

Remember: The No. 1 mechanism that causes muscle growth is mechanical tension. As such, it's your best bet to keep progressive overload in the mix.



JASON B. MIYASHITA
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TAGA *Plus* Contributing Writer

Saving and investing wisely

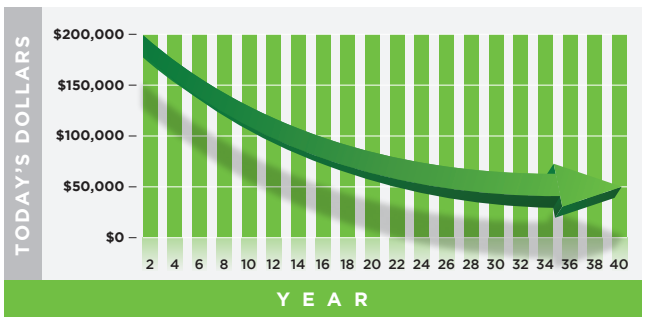
The first step in investing is to secure a strong financial foundation. Start with these four basic steps:

1 **Create a "rainy day" reserve.**
Set aside enough cash to get you through an unexpected period of illness or unemployment--three to six months' worth of living expenses is generally recommended. Because you may need to use these funds unexpectedly, you'll generally want to put the cash in a low-risk, liquid investment.

2 **Pay off your debts.**
It may make more sense to pay off high-interest-rate debt (for example, credit card debt) before making investments that may have a lower or more uncertain return.

3 **Get insured.**
There is no better way to put your extra cash to work for you than by having adequate insurance. It's your best protection against financial loss, so review your home, auto, health, disability, life, and other policies, and increase your coverage, if needed.

4 **Max out any tax-deferred retirement plans, such as 401(k)s and IRAs.**
Putting money in these accounts defers income taxes, which means you'll have more money to save. Take full advantage if they are available to you.



The impact of 3% yearly inflation on the purchasing power of $200,000.

WHY INVEST?

To try to fight inflation

When people say, "I'm not an investor," it's often because they worry about the potential for market losses. It's true that investing involves risk as well as reward, and investing is no guarantee that you'll beat inflation or even come out ahead. However, there's also another type of loss to be aware of: the loss of purchasing power over time. During periods of inflation, each dollar you've saved will buy less and less as time goes on.

Inflation reduces the purchasing power of your dollars over time.

To take advantage of compound interest

Anyone who has a savings account understands the basics of compounding: The funds in your savings account earn interest, and that interest is added to your account balance. The next time interest is calculated, it's based on the increased value of your account. In effect, you earn interest on your interest. Many people, however, don't fully appreciate the impact that compounded earnings can have, especially over a long period of time.

Compounding interest

Let's say you invest $5,000 a year for 30 years (see illustration). After 30 years you will have invested a total of $150,000. Yet, assuming your funds grow at exactly 6 percent each year, after 30 years you will have over $395,000, because of compounding.

Note: *This is a hypothetical example and is not intended to reflect the actual performance of any specific investment. Taxes and investment fees and expenses are not reflected. If they were, the results would be lower. Actual results will vary. Rates of return will vary over time, particularly for long-term investments.*

Compounding has a "snowball" effect. The more money that is added to the account, the greater its benefit. Also, the more frequently interest is compounded—for example, monthly instead of annually—the more quickly your savings build. The sooner you start saving or investing, the more time and potential your investments have for growth. In effect, compounding helps you provide for your financial future by doing some of the work for you.

Jason B. Miyashita, CIMA®, CRPS®, AIFA® is managing director, senior vice president, Investments, and senior institutional consultant at Raymond James & Associates, Inc. in Guam.

JAN/FEB/MAR 2020
SPORTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

Public School System Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League
Private and public school teams battle for the boys high school bragging rights.

5th IT&E Saipan Aquathlon and 10K Run
This event is the second leg of the Road to Tagaman Race Series.

FEBRUARY

Northern Marianas Masters Friendly Tournament 2020
Northern Mariana Islands Football Association will host the Guizhou Women's Football Team and Tianjin Shengde Men's Football Team, as the visiting squads battle select players from Saipan.

White Coconut Tennis Classic
Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association will hold its first tournament of the year.

NMSA Annual Sports Banquet
Northern Marianas Sports Association honors the top performers of the 2019 season.

MARCH

JP Hero Run
TanHoldings and Tan Siu Lin Foundation hold this event in memory of executive John Pangelinan and to honor brave cancer victims and their families.

Tagaman Triathlon
The longest-running triathlon event in the Western Pacific will have its 31st edition.

Saipan Marathon
The CNMI's premier running event is expected to draw over a thousand runners with the addition of a 5K race.

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HEALTH IS WEALTH

Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Malika Miyawaki

Scholar.
Athlete.

These words best describe 17-year-old Malika Miyawaki.

The Saipan International School senior recently made the sports headlines after teaming up with fellow top junior player Robbie Schorr in winning the mixed 5.0 doubles in the 10th TanHoldings Tennis Classic.

What's amazing was that Miyawaki and Schorr did it against siblings Carol and Sean Lee. The former just happened to be No. 132 in the ITF junior rankings as of December 2019.

On the other end of the news spectrum, Miyawaki made the CNMI, and her mother, Ami, proud after being awarded a QuestBridge Scholarship, a full-ride four-year scholarship that is handed to only a little over 1,000 high school seniors across the United States. She will pursue her higher education at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia beginning in the fall of 2020.

Here, Miyawaki shares with TAGA *Plus*' first quarter of 2020 edition her secret to success in the tennis courts.

Why and when did you take up tennis?

I started tennis when I was 6 but started playing seriously when I was 11. I started it because my friends started it.

MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
TAGA *Plus* Associate Editor

Who are the tennis players you look up to?

I look up to Carol Lee because she made so many sacrifices and put lot of work to be a great tennis player and, even though she's really good, she is very humble about it. I also look up to Jimin Woo because he practices so hard. He practices almost everyday and he has improved so much.

How do you train for tournaments?

I take coach Jeff Race's lessons three times a week and I try to practice on days other than that with friends.

What's your most memorable game?

My most memorable game…was when I won a match when I was down 0-6,0-5 in Australia representing Pacific Oceania in 2015. It felt great to win that match with the score 0-6,7-6,6-2. I don't remember the name of my opponent, but it was an Australian girl. It really taught me that I should never give up.

What is the part of your game you're most proud of?

I am most proud of my drive to try for every single ball. I never give up and fight to return every ball. I also really like my volleys.

What part of your game do you think needs work?

I need to play with more confidence. I always fear that I am going to lose and this makes me play bad[ly]. This is especially evident in my backhand. My confidence in my backhand is so low and it is causing me to be bad in executing my backhand.

What court on Saipan is your favorite to play on?

The Pacific Islands Club tennis courts are my favorite because I play there the most and I like the surface.

What are your plans as far as tennis is concerned?

I hope to play tennis in college!

Any advice to newbies who just picked up the sport and those thinking of playing tennis?

I want them to continue this sport because it seriously changed my life. Tennis made me stronger and it opened me up to a new world. I made so many friends from different islands through tennis. Even though it may be boring, it will get fun! The friends you make in tennis are going to be your closest friends.

Healthy choices

Spanish Egg-White Omelet 311 Calories

A primary egg-white omelet stuffed with a tasty vegetarian selection of red and green bell pepper, bean sprout, tomato strips, sliced mushroom and onions. Served with wheat toast.

BIBA Celebrate your health!

Grilled Mahi-Mahi Sandwich

Grilled mahi-mahi fillet on a whole wheat bun topped with salsa or Dijon mustard. Served with a side of green salad.

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Note: Please advice your server of any food allergies or ingredient concern. Thank you!

a feast for the senses

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TAGA *Plus* Contributing Writer

Nothing new here, but the sun sets around 5:50pm on Saipan. Don't forget we live on a tropical island and people pay thousands of dollars to come here! So enjoy the sunset once in a while. I recommend Micro Beach!

The berry cream cheese scones are a favorite staff pick! Bakers at Great Harvest Bread Co. in Chalan Kanoa head to work at 2am daily to bake these scones fresh.

For guys, Regina at T Galleria recommends both Salvatore Ferragamo Uomo *eau de toilette* sprays.

It's not spring anymore, but you can still smell like roses with Gucci Bloom...new at T Galleria.

Combatting hypertension one village at a time. In collaboration with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Division of Public Health, nursing students of the Northern Marianas College screen people for high blood pressure in Kagman. From left, Lahaina and Klevelyn.

Looking for a new spot to play pool and listen to a live band? Check out the 9-11 Resto Bar in San Jose!

You and your significant other can't decide between poke bowls or teriyaki plates? Don't worry...Poki Yaki has both!

Father and son bonding: Frank and baby CJ enjoy the Kids Play Zone at Summer Snow Bakery and Cafe. Buying playtime for CJ gets Frank a mango iced tea to enjoy!

“I started everything myself and worked my way up,” said Tan Bun Kuy.

BEA CABRERA

Ta Bun Kuy responds to the siren call of Saipan

Forty years ago, when Ta Bun Kuy first came here in the ’70s from war-stricken Vietnam, it was not purely business that set his path to the CNMI. Rather, it was in response to an undefinable siren call of a life outside Vietnam, of building a future for himself far from the desolation and misery of war.

Looking back at it now, Ta says he had a sense that his life and every detail of it was not going to be in Vietnam—that he was not going to get married in Vietnam and that his wife will neither be Chinese or Vietnamese.

Nowadays, the 67-year-old Ta has established himself on Saipan, with several businesses to his name like the Micro Beach Hotel, a restaurant, Dollar Days, a beauty parlor, real estate, a shooting range, document processing, Noni Saipan pure juice, and Miracle Oil made on Saipan, among others. But, as in life, it wasn’t straightforward. After the Vietnam War, Ta’s family relocated to Guam.

“From Guam, business called me to come to Saipan and this is where I have been anchored ever since. That sense that I was meant to be somewhere else, Saipan answered it as I have stayed here building businesses, married a Filipina, raised a family and the thought of the war in Vietnam is all but a distant memory,” he said.

It was while he was in Guam that Ta got a call from his “godfather” and the owner of the company where he used to work in Vietnam. His godfather, who was already on Saipan at that time, invited him to the CNMI.

“I came here to work with him and together, we started looking around for business opportunities. That time was very hard as there were no direct flights and most of the tourists go to Guam, making Saipan just an option tour,” he said.

In the ’70s, business livelihood and the economy were slow in the CNMI. “There were days when you

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can wait on Beach Road for an hour and not a single car will pass by."

At that time, Ta had just left Vietnam and the future seemed uncertain "but I had the courage to go on and see what happens so we tried to acquire a fishing license but, after some time, my godfather decided to leave and I was left to start again, this time on my own," he said.

An enterprising Ta went into the glass bottom boat business where passengers were transported from Saipan to Managaha and see the bottom of the ocean from the transparent boat. He later changed his business into a gift shop, paving the way for Ta's entry all other businesses.

"I started everything myself and worked my way up. …Anything that can go and make money legally, I'm happy to do it," he said.

Ta is also committed to community service and was once a board director of the Marianas Visitors Bureau. He was also a board member of the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter and chairman of the Chinese Association of Saipan.

Although he is no longer the association's chairman, he still make time to help the Chinese community.

BEA CABRERA

Tan Bun Kuy poses with his wife and business partner, Nenita Castro Ta.

Ta said that respect and being a people person have made him a better businessman. "I have come this far because of respect for other people and being friendly to them. When I look at a person, I respect your personality and character and not because you have money because you having money has nothing to do with me. Equally important is you need to be friendly to people because people spread the word about you," he added.

Ta does not see himself retiring anytime soon. Whether the economy goes up or down, he knows that he is here to stay.

"I have seen the economy go up and down and I know many Chinese business people have left during hard times but I stayed patient. …After the garment factory days, everything went down but we kept on.

"I have no regrets leaving Vietnam. I love Saipan so much so that when my father passed away, we buried him here as this is my home now. …Sometimes you have to believe that something is already set in your life. I did believe as a young man in Vietnam about wanting to go far away from the war and live a life that I have now," he said.

Quick tips when buying a used car

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When buying secondhand vehicles, to ensure that you do not get a lemon, or one whose paint job had been jumped up to hide a defective engine, here are a few quick tips from auto mechanic Ronnie Lanuza and car sales associate Shae Stovell:

LANUZA

- Check the mileage of the vehicle;
- Ask for a mechanic's opinion;
- Ask a mechanic to do a compression test on the vehicle;
- Check car's history;
- Ask why the owner is selling the car;
- Compare the blue book value of the car's price.

His final recommendation: It is better to buy a secondhand car from a dealer rather than a person-to-person transaction.

Ronnie Lanuza started as a body fender mechanic and welder at Unity Trade, first arriving on Saipan in 1984 before moving to Microl Corp. (Toyota). He left Microl in 1998 and opened his own auto shop.

STOVELL

Shae Stovell, who goes by the name Saipan Shae, is a sales associate at Triple J Motors. His first recommendation, of course, is having the would-be secondhand car buyer avail of Triple J's 27-point inspection that costs $54.95.

"When buying a used car privately, you never know what you're going to get. By bringing the car to us, we check the vehicle top to bottom. That way, you know what you're getting into when you are about to purchase the vehicle. That $54.95 could save you lots of money in the long run," said Stovell.

His other recommendations, after checking, include:

- Offering categories to see if the car is in good shape;
- Giving opinion on what needs immediate care and what might need future attention;
- Asking for the car's service history at any of the three main car dealerships on the island (Atkins Kroll, Joeten Motors, and Triple J).

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What makes a good employer?

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Job satisfaction is no longer measured by how big or small a company you work for. Employees now look for an employer who nurtures a culture where their work contribution and skills make them feel needed and secured. How an employer treats his/her workforce may have positive and negative impacts on the employee and the company.

Jon Decoteau, the divisional director West and the California Field Services leader of the Society for Human Resources Management based in Sacramento, California, places a premium on companies that have a vision for the future and are working on it.

"The CNMI's growing economy and flourishing workforce goes well with the personal development of people," Decoteau said. "I love coming to places that have a vision for the future and are executing on it."

Here, we ask him, what makes a good employer?

> You need employees to move beyond thinking of their jobs simply as 'jobs' but as a career.

You're clear about who you are, what you are doing and the higher purpose as to how it benefits your customers and your communities

A good employer is one that has a clear goal and purpose that adds value to their customers, employees, and investors. Those goals should include improving the community in which they serve and where their employees live. Do that and you create even more opportunity for future customers. Nurture communities and you benefit by getting that community's talent, passion and brand loyalty.

Create a strong culture...and make it fun too

Good employers create a culture of trust and partnership with their employees while having some fun. Great companies get people to feel that they serve a purpose higher than themselves and they are a critical part of a team, while having some fun, too. Culture is shaped by the way you structure and reward work. Think about how you design, «how the work gets done» and what gets rewarded.

You provide more than 'just a job'; you give the potential for a career

You need employees to move beyond thinking of their jobs simply as "jobs" but as a career. Help them understand how they contribute to the success of the business, how you are growing them for their profession and how they make a positive impact on their community, too. When employees feel that they just have a "job," the paycheck is all that is important. When employees feel like they have a career, they are willing to commit more than just time and skill. They invest in the heart of the organization because their future is bright.

Screen for employees that are as committed to your company success as you are in their individual success.

If you don't care about your people, why would you expect them to care about your success? Good employers create high-performing organizations. They can only do that with high-performing employees. Be relentless in finding and then nurturing great talent. Be selective. Then invest heavily in your people. Be passionate about your employees. They have the success of your business in their hands. Develop. Coach. Provide growth opportunities. Hire people who can lead, not just manage.

Keep your head up. Look two ways down the road and try some experiments

The workforce and workplace are changing at a dramatic pace. Challenge yourself and your HR teams to experiment with "pilot programs" for innovative ways to do work and how the work gets done. In the age of Google, there is no shortage of great ideas, just a shortage of employers willing to try something new. Yes, some of these experiments will fail. But if you don't come across as willing to evolve, experiment, and improve, how can you expect your teams to evolve, experiment and improve?

In the short time that he was here in the Commonwealth, Jon Decoteau saw a lot of growth and potential. "That's pretty exciting. At the end of the day, people who are working and developing themselves make better individuals, make better parents, they provide for their families and children and, ultimately, make stronger citizens."

Decoteau is responsible for leading SHRM's West Division Field Services team and providing membership-focused services for chapters and state councils of the 290,000-member global Human Resources Association.

He has more than 25 years of human resources experience and a track record of getting organizations aligned, evaluating their strengths, defining projects and then driving those global projects to completion. He has done this at The Coca-Cola Company, at Motorola, and at eBay.

He visited Saipan last October where he did a workshop on the promotion of business success in the workplace.

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SWINGSWITCH

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Nate Guerrero grew up in a baseball field; most everyone in his family play the islands' favorite sport. These days, though, you would rarely see him at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield. Instead, Guerrero is usually spotted at the Northern Marianas Badminton Association court, swinging a racket rather than throwing fast pitches.

Guerrero made the switch after discovering badminton through his wife, Miles. Before that, though, Guerrero played baseball for more than a decade and even represented in the CNMI in the Senior League World Series in Bangor, Maine.

"You couldn't get away from baseball back then. My dad, brother, uncles, and cousins all played baseball so that's how I got into a sport. We would go down to the 'Tan Ko' field to watch my dad's games every weekend," Guerrero said.

One day, he got an invite to join his wife's co-workers for a friendly game and hit a round a little bit, as he was still not squared off with the physical demands of the sport. But that was also then when he discovered a passion for the game.

"I've always been interested in badminton since my last few years in baseball, but I just didn't know that there was a place here where they actually have a facility or a court to play in," he said.

Making the switch wasn't that easy, though. When he first started playing badminton, Guerrero said it was very difficult, mainly for the cardio. "I never realized how much movement and how exhausting badminton can be. When I started, I was already trying to catch my breath at 10 points and badminton is 21 points, best out of 3 sets," he recalls.

The difference was that he fell in love with the sport. Despite the initial hardship, "I absolutely loved it. I started coming every day to play with whoever was there and tried to learn and pick up things from everybody, in addition to watching a lot of YouTube videos," he said.

And though he had a tough time learning badminton at the beginning, the skill he mastered in baseball helped him adjust well to his new sport.

"Coming from baseball definitely helped me out with my motion for swinging the racket, especially for smashing, because I was a pitcher and the motion for both are very much alike," said Guerrero, adding that the switch was very timely, as manning the mound for over 13 years has taken a toll on his shoulder that he decided to just stop playing baseball.

Though baseball will always be his first love, Guerrero said he will stick to badminton for now and help grow the sport. He loves the fast-paced back and forth action in badminton and how you could have opportunities to dictate the flow of the game and control where the shuttle goes. In badminton, if you lose, it's really all on you, Guerrero added.

"As opposed to a lot of other sports that require a lot of teammates on the field, one wrong move and the whole game is gone. With badminton, as well as some other sports, that wouldn't be much of an issue. It's definitely minimized," Guerrero said.

Discovering badminton also gave him a second chance to excel as an athlete and a and he challenges others to try engaging themselves in a sport they are unfamiliar with and see how far they can go.

"Don't be afraid to try something new. You might end up loving it or even being better than your previous sport. Don't let the fear of starting over or not being so good in a new sport prevent you from playing it. Even the greats started somewhere," he said.

One more time

The former pitcher captained the CNMI national badminton team that debuted in the Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa last year and he hopes to make another tour of duty for the Commonwealth when Saipan hosts the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

Guerrero and his teammates—Janelle and Jordan Pangilinan, Ezekiel and Daniel Macario, Andreau Galvez, and Nicole Malasarte—finished fifth in the team event in Samoa—a respectable performance for a first-timer in a very competitive field that includes New Caledonia and Tahiti. The CNMI crew made a good account of themselves in the Pacific Games despite having no professional coach and limited training and tournaments (as the island was recovering from Super Typhoon Yutu).

"We were the new and unranked team go-

ing in there, and though we placed fifth in that tournament, it was definitely an eye-opener to see what competition outside of the Marianas was like. Though we lost, I'm very grateful for the opportunity because we got to play against Pacific's top players, who are world-ranked and have played in the same tournaments as the top badminton players in the world. After challenging them, I didn't feel that we were light years away," Guerrero said.

He believes that after their Pacific Games debuts and, with the help of a coach and more training sessions, they will get better. And if they are selected again to don the colors of the CNMI, they are headed for a much-improved performance at the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

protect yourself

Monique Baza's life changed in an instant one morning in 2012.

She had just entered her car—an action that she has done thousands of times—when Raymond Charles Tedtaotao Camacho popped up from behind her in the car's backseat, pulled her hair, and told her to drive, or he would kill her.

Baza was abducted, beaten, and raped. Thankfully, the former high school teacher survived the ordeal and lived to tell her story to seek justice and start a group that helps Guam women and their families who are victims of heinous crimes.

Baza co-founded the Guam Family Justice Center Alliance while she was still battling Camacho in court. Camacho was then sentenced to life in prison for kidnapping and rape in 2017, while Baza continued her advocacy, which includes talking to women and teaching them about self-defense.

Baza, who is also working on *Enough*, a film based on her abduction story and how she survived, recently teamed up with Trench Tech and sat down with about 17 women and a couple of men for a one-and-a-half hour discussion and demonstration on protecting yourself and stopping sexual violence.

Trench Tech founder Cuki Alvarez assisted Baza in the demonstration of self-defense moves/maneuvers and started the session with this reminder:

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WHAT TO DO

SCENARIO A

Someone grabs you from behind

Your immediate reaction should be to lower your center of gravity and slightly twist and turn to your side so that your back isn't up against his chest. This gives you space to free your arm(s), which you can use to hit the groin and force your attacker to let go. Once he lets go, you can continue with cleaner/clearer strikes to the eyes, nose and throat since both your arms are free. Once you are able to, run and scream to attract attention.

Below are some scenarios and the appropriate self-defense maneuvers.

SCENARIO B

Someone choking you

When someone grabs your neck, whether with one or two hands, your first reaction should be to tuck your chin to lessen the space between his hands and your throat. Next, immediately twist and turn to your side as you bring your elbow and arm up and over his arm(s), then force your elbow down as hard as possible to break his grip/clutch on your neck. Once you've "elbowed" and "chopped" his arms free from your neck, you are already in the position to strike his face with your elbow as well. After you hit his face, run away.

SCENARIO C

Someone grabs your hand or wrist

If and when anyone grabs your wrist to try and control you, remember this "rule of thumb": Move your wrist toward his thumb as opposed to moving it toward his four fingers. This is the "weak link" in the hold and, if you force your wrist toward his thumb, it is much easier to break his hold and set yourself free.

You can also make a fist with the arm that is being controlled and use your other hand to hold your own fist to give you added leverage and torque to break his grip because now you will be using two of your arms against one of his. Once you break free, run and scream for help.

Always be aware of your surroundings, Alvarez said.

- Take a moment to check if anyone is inside before opening your car;
- Do not park in dark areas whenever possible.
- Always try and walk with a friend.
- Get off your phone while walking to an ATM or to your car.

Buying time

Baza pointed out that knowing self-defense does not mean you are going to challenge your attacker all the way.

"You are using the self-defense moves to buy time to escape the situation or get someone's attention to help you," she said.

3 C's

When doing these maneuvers, Alvarez said one must exhibit the three C's: conviction, commitment, and confidence.

"Your attacker must know and feel your willpower, seriousness, and determination to fight back," Alvarez said.

Baza added that simple words such as "No and 'Back off" can also help one avoid becoming a sexual assault victim.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Oscar Ada now lives in Hawaii.

Oscar Ada poses with his wife, Malama Johnson, and their two children, Stella and Samson.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

OSCARADA

On Saipan!

That's the answer to the question if you ask TAGA Plus over the Christmas holidays last year, as Oscar Ada and her young family were on vacation in the 670.

Between munching on Galaxy II's glazed donuts, burgers and tacos at Ina's Kitchen, and the comfort food goodness at Shirley's Coffee Shop, the former CNMI national basketball player visited family and friends during his short but memorable stay back home. He also sneaked a basketball game or two at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium for good measure.

When not vacationing on Saipan, the now 33-year-old Ada lives in Honolulu, Hawaii with his beautiful wife, Malama Johnson, who also is from Saipan, and their two children, Stella and Samson.

Ada is currently a social studies teacher at Pearl City High School.

At 6'4" tall, Ada seemed to be a natural for hoop stardom, especially on an island where 6-footers are considered giants. He would like to differ, though. "I feel I'm the most uncoordinated 6'4" guy around."

But what made him a legend in the mid- to early 2000s was that he could dunk. "I was 17 when I first dunked in the [Rotary Club of Saipan Basketball League]. Bob Coldeen was there and it went on the air on KMCV 7," he told TAGA Plus.

What not everyone knew was that before his in-game slam, Ada had several practice dunks at the basketball court at Kagman High School while waiting for the school bus to bring him to the Ada Gym.

Ada first played basketball in middle

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school with friends Lester Babauta and Andrew Masga. "I remember going to CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) with them on Saturdays. Then I played with the Dandan Rebels for the IVYBL (Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League)."

Ada then suited up for Phil Seman when he was in eighth grade and never forgets the time when he and five of his teammates would climb aboard his coach's pickup truck to go to basketball games every weekend.

He idolized Ben Wallace and Dennis Rodman for their fierce defense and rabid rebounding when he was still growing up.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Oscar Ada wades into the beach at the back of McDonald's Garapan where his grandfather's store and gasoline station used to stand.

"I'm not [going to] score a lot of points but I'm [going to] get a lot of rebounds and block shots," he said.

He also points to coaches Eli Rangamar and Rufino Aguon for helping him become at key defensive player for the national team, the former for getting him into weightlifting and some track and field and the latter for not giving up on him in basketball.

After relocating to Hawaii, Ada got a taste of big-boy basketball as he was no longer the tallest player in the court. "When I came to Hawaii, other players were taller than me or as tall me. That's how I learned to read tendencies. I got better reading tendencies. Played in recreational leagues in Hawaii. Became a better rebounder and blocker playing here."

Interestingly, for a player who competed for the latte and stone many times, played for Ol'Aces and Brothers in the local leagues, and even went up against powerhouses New Zealand and Australia, Ada's most indelible hoops memory came recently.

"My most memorable time playing basketball was in Hawaii in a simple recreational league. My daughter was old enough to watch me and just to hear her cheer for me 'go daddy go!' gave me goosebumps. …It trumps everything like the blocked shots title in Rotary or playing against Australia and New Zealand in 2009."

Now a doting dad, Ada has become sort of a soccer dad to Stella and Samson. "Both my kids have taken a liking to baseball, which I know nothing about but they enjoy playing so much."

Like everyone that's been away from home, Ada said he will miss the family gatherings and the food. "But with technology, the ability to Facetime, video chat, and live-stream family events…it doesn't feel like you are missing too much."

After the short vacation, he said he would continue to be in close contact with friends and family so they know how things are going on in his life.

"But I would like to make a shoutout to Galaxy donuts. Still the best glazed donuts anywhere in the world! I've been to the East Coast and the West Coast…and here in Hawaii, [yet] no one beats Galaxy donuts...not Dunkin Donuts, not Krispy Kreme. Galaxy donuts make my heart sing!"

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Oscar Ada with son, Samson.

a whole new world...

If you are not aware that the T Galleria mall is being renovated, then you must be living under a rock. And if you have not seen even just a fraction of those eye-popping changes, then it's time to swing by the mall to get an eyeful of what promises to be a glittering display of luxury shopping.

Renovation work is not done yet. This early, though, the "wow" factor that will surely amaze its shoppers are already evident, with design concepts that pop and a fresh layout that dazzles. All these are being done to bring the T Galleria to the next level when Duty Free Saipan Ltd. introduces the "shop and dine" lifestyle—as embodied by a chic new café where shoppers can get a quick "pick-me-up" while shopping.

The sights, sounds, and feel of the new interior and exterior spaces are a welcome concept on Saipan, which has been hungry for places where people can converge, shop, and dine in a luxurious setting.

At the opening of the Cartier boutique inside DFS Saipan in the early part of last year, DFS vice president for store operations Milan Rabold said the DFS mall intends to create a space that will offer both shopping and dining experiences for customers.

"…the interior is dedicated to fashion,

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BEA CABRERA

The newly opened Hafa Adai Roasting Company coffee shop inside T Galleria DFS Ltd. shines with its tropical/island décor.

BEA CABRERA

Designer brand stores fill the hallway of the newly renovated T Galleria of DFS Ltd.

The Hafa Adai Roasting Company patio that allows coffee lovers to enjoy their drink al fresco and with the view of bustling Garapan.

BEA CABRERA

watches, and jewelry. …The total building [space] is about 100,000 square feet and about 70% of that is dedicated to shops, [which covers] hundreds of brands."

"The exterior renovation is now underway, which explains the abundance of scaffolding surrounding the building's façade," he added.

Shopping is an experience with famous brands like Fendi, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Tiffany & Co., Loewe, Bulgari, Prada, Hermes—all aligned and visible from left to right. Their window displays are like works of art.

Other brands are Bally, Michael Kors, Mido, Ralph Lauren, MAC, Dior, etc.

The expansion also paved the way for other brands to have their own shops rather than just kiosks. Cartier, the French company known the world over for its luxury products, brought its brand to the CNMI with a new boutique inside DFS that opened its doors in February last year.

A section in the beauty area of T Galleria is now called the "Excitement Zone," which DFS management described as the "happening" area. Last year in May, fashion forward British brand "Boy London" launched its spring/summer collection at the Excitement Zone.

According to Rabold, the next step is to open restaurants at the south side of the building where the casino used to be. "Right now, we are using the area as temporary areas for some of our brands and we plan to maximize that whole area where we will have restaurants in the future," he said.

At the beginning of this year, T Galleria opened its first coffee shop called "Hafa Adai Roasting Company" where the fresh smell of coffee will surely lure you to the shop. Once inside, feel the relaxed ambiance set by the tropical décor that intends to make you feel that you are truly in paradise.

The shop also has an outdoor patio so people can enjoy al fresco coffee drinking in the morning, allow the cool breeze to caress you while having handcrafted tea in the afternoon, or watch the sun go down while enjoying a smoothie.

A VIP lounge is also on the agenda. For complete customer satisfaction, they will offer complimentary WiFi, concierge service to help tourists, shuttle service, and spacious parking.

"…We are building a very beautiful and modern façade that even I can't wait to see myself because it's going to be fantastic," said Rabold.

7 tips *for going back to work after holidays*

CASSIEOWENS
The Philadelphia Inquirer

As we say our goodbyes to the holidays, the promise of the new year stands right in front of us. Back to life, back to reality.

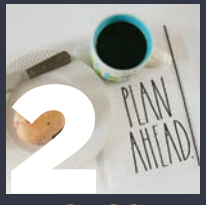
If only that transition could always be simple. It's a time for a reset and new resolutions, all while returning to the work grind. The pressures can be a lot to manage, so The Inquirer gathered self-care tips to help with that to-do list for both professional and personal goals. So, 2020, let's go.

1 Don't beat yourself up

You may be reflecting on the things that you wish you had done differently. Understandable, but don't get stuck there, said executive coach Amy Jen Su.

"It's easy after the holidays to beat ourselves up for all that we did or did not do," she said. Su, the Washington, D.C.-based author of "The Leader You Want to Be: Five Essential Principles for Bringing Out Your Best Self Every Day," gave examples such as arguing with a mother-in-law, or eating too many cookies, or not making progress with a certain project as intended.

"It doesn't matter at this point; what has transpired has already taken place," Su said. "Stay present to a smooth transition back to work versus replaying the holidays in your mind. Forgive yourself for any actions or interactions you had that you now regret, learn from them for future action, and move on."

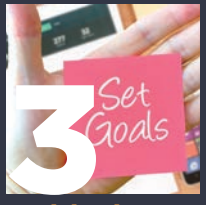


2 Ease back into things

Even if your to-do list is super-long, pace yourself. Krystal Reddick-Pollard, founder of Total Life Care Coaching in Elizabeth, N.J., said you should try to avoid overwhelming yourself. Reddick-Pollard recommended planning to give yourself some time to breathe.

"If you can, take breaks every hour or every other hour, for two or three minutes, take a walk, drink some water," she said. "Try to get up and move your body"

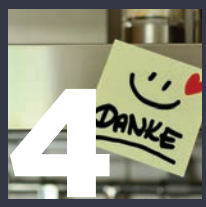
Shesheena Bray, a West Philadelphia therapist and founder of Going Inward Wellness, said that when organizing priorities, go for what's feasible, for the "low-hanging fruit." Bray said it's worth asking, "What are the things that you can take on that (you can accomplish that) can make you feel good?"



3 Look back to your previous goals

Don't let your old goals disappear. "I would first encourage people to go back to the commitments you've already made," Bray said. The distance between 2019 and 2020, she noted, is just one day after all. When thinking through those goals, Bray said, see what you want to modify or retool for the new year.

Beyond that, Bray continued, if you have something you're hoping for, make sure you actually have the room for it, whether that's new love, new opportunities, and so on. Consider, she said, "intentionally creating space for things that we say that we want."



4 Try writing a gratitude list

To reflect on what makes you thankful, Su recommended writing a list. Jot down the good things from the holiday season, to bring a "lens of gratitude" to both your time off and the work you'll do.

"Reflect on that great brunch your friends hosted and how much you enjoyed seeing everyone. Look at the pictures you took on your camera and breathe in a taste of satisfaction for the quality time you got to spend with your family," Su wrote. "Feel gratitude for the days off you got especially in the context where many do not have work or the means to celebrate as you did."

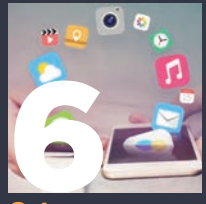
5 Reevaluate your routines

Now is also a great time to assess your morning rituals, Bray said.

"What do I want to pick up, and what's no longer serving me?" she posed. "Are you needing more affirmation? Are you needing to slow down more in the morning?" See what needs adjusting, then commit to what will allow you to have the best start each day.

Your evening routine might need tweaking, too, said Reddick-Pollard. Hone in on how you can be better prepared.

"The best morning routines," said Reddick-Pollard, "start the night before."



6 Get a new planner

Both readers and experts said that a new planner can be key. Reddick-Pollard, who created a weekly self-care planner, prefers the paper ones.

"It's really important to write things down," she said. "The brain processes content differently if you write it down versus if you type it."

However, digital planners can also get the job done. "Whatever your method is, make sure you have a system to track your goals," she advised. "Track what you've accomplished from week to week and month to month."

7 Don't base your success on social media

While perusing social media, you might be inclined to compare your own accomplishments to what you're seeing on your timeline. But social media posts, Bray observed, are too curated to be a fair way to measure that.

"Your ability to take care of yourself is one of the greatest marks of success in my eyes," Bray said. "Create benchmarks along those lines instead of comparing yourself to other people."

No one reaches greatness without working for it…TRAIN

No skill will be developed without using it…PLAY

No game is lost if you got something out of it…LEARN

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